

VALIDATION OF THE COMBINATION *ELEUSINE CORACANA*  
SUBSPECIES *AFRICANA* (KENNEDY-O'BYRNE) HILU & DEWET

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ABSTRACT

The new combination *Eleusine coracana* (L.) Gaertn. subspecies *africana* (Kennedy-O'Byrne) Hilu & deWet was published without meeting some criteria of valid publication. The criteria are hereby met by providing direct reference for the basionym and joining the authors names by "et".

KEY WORDS: Poaceae, *Eleusine*, nomenclature

The African tetraploid *Eleusine africana* Kennedy-O'Byrne was segregated from the pantropic weedy diploid species *E. indica* (L.) Gaertn. by Kennedy-O'Byrne (1957). Recognition of the new species was based primarily on chromosome number and certain quantitative morphological characters, with emphasis on lemma length as the primary distinguishing character. Phillips (1972) recognized *E. africana* as a subspecies of *E. indica* because of overlap in various reproductive characters, including those that distinguish between the two taxa. She, however, indicated that both taxa can be distinguished on the bases of qualitative morphological characters related to ligule structure, seed shape, and seed surface ornamentation. She also (Phillips 1972) pointed out the morphological overlap and the natural hybridization between subspecies *africana* and domesticated *E. coracana*.

Cytogenetic data show *Eleusine indica* subsp. *africana* to be conspecific with *E. coracana* (Chennaveerdiah & Hiremath 1974). Based on these and morphological information, the former was placed as a subspecies in *E. coracana* (Hilu & deWet 1976). Subsequent cytogenetic, biochemical, and molecular work support this taxonomic treatment (reviewed in Hilu & Johnson 1992).

The *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature*, Article 33, Section 2, states that "A new combination, or an avowed substitute (*nomen novum*),

published on or after 1 Jan. 1953, for a previously and validly published name is not validly published unless its basionym or the replaced synonym is clearly indicated and a full and direct reference given to its author and place of valid publication with page or plate reference and date". The *Code* also requires that authors names joined by "et" or "&" but not "and" since the publication is done in Latin. Neither of these two rules were followed in the publication of Hilu & deWet (1976). The valid publication of the new combination *Eleusine coracana* subspecies *africana* is given below:

**Eleusine coracana** (L.) Gaertn. subspecies **africana** (Kennedy-O'Byrne) Hilu et deWet, *comb. nov.* BASIONYM: *Eleusine africana* Kennedy-O'Byrne, *In Kew Bulletin* 12:65-72. (1957). TYPE: SOUTH AFRICA. Cape Province, Kimberely District, Warrenton-on-Vaal, March 1950, *Wilman H.K.I* (HOLOTYPE: K). Synonym: *Eleusine indica* (L.) Gaertn. subspecies *africana* (Kennedy-O'Byrne) S.M. Phillips. *Kew Bulletin* 27:251-270. (1972).

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